federal register

Friday
May 9, 1980

Part V

Department of the Interior

Fish and Wildlife Service

California Condor Endangered Species Permit Application; Notice of Notice of Receipt and Outline

DEPARTMENT OF THE INTERIOR

Fish and Wildlife Service

Endangered Species Permit; Receipt of Application

Applicant: USFWS, Patuxent Wildlife Research Center, Laurel, Md.

Species: California Condor (*Gymnogyps californianus*).

File No.: PRT 2–6563.

Key Personnel: See Appendix.

Long range objective: To establish a secure and self-sustaining wild population.

Purposes: Enhancement of survival and propagation and scientific research.

Duration of proposed study: 35 years.

Summary of proposed project: To take nine condors from the wild to establish a captive breeding population and to radio-tag as many of those left in the wild as possible to determine movements and salient factors relating to their needs and survival in the wild.

Outline of California Condor Endangered Species Permit Application

I. Trapping and Handling

A. *Methods:* Condors will be captured by one of the following methods: (1) bow net or clap trap, (2) cannon net, or (3) walk-in trap. All three methods have proven effective in capturing large cathartid species but the cannon net seems most promising.

B. *Handling:* Trapping operations will involve at least four handlers, including one cathartid/raptor-experienced veterinarian well supplied with all appropriate medical equipment. Initial trappings will be aimed at capturing single birds to ensure safe handling and to document the effectiveness of the trapping through normal recordkeeping and film documentation. All precautions will be taken to handle birds carefully and to minimize stress.

C. *Sexing:* All birds will be sexed by one or more methods including (1) assaying levels of sex hormones in fecal material, (2) chromosomal analysis of feather pulp, and (3) laparoscopy examination, i.e. direct inspection of sex organs of the bird with a small optical telescope through a tiny incision in the adbominal wall, Laparoscopy seems most promising at this time.

D. *Tissue samples:* Twenty cc. of blood will be taken from a wing vein of each condor trapped and used for the following analyses; (1) organochlorine and heavy metal contaminants, (2) pathogen and blood parasite composition, and (3) genetic makeup including DNA hybridization studies of genetic relationships of cathartid vultures and enzyme polymorphism studies to index the degree of inbreeding in the condor population.

In addition, up to two grams of contour feathers will be plucked for heavy metal contamination analysis.

E. *Other examinations:* Other examinations of captured birds will include: (1) tracheal and cloacal swab cultures, (2) fecal analysis, (3) external parasite examination, and (4) molt and plumage examination.

II. Radio Telemetry Program

A. *Objective:* To radio-tag as many condors as possible during the telemetry study scheduled for a minimum period of three years.

B. *Schedule:* Trapping of California condors will begin in September 1980 after USFWS and State personnel are satisfied that methods tested on Andean condors (*Vultur gryphus*) in Peru during summer 1980 are adaptable for California condors. Initially, only two California condors will be captured and fitted with radio transmitters (three if one pre-flight juvenile is available) for assessing the feasibility of continuing with the tried method of capture. If after one month of evaluation no unresolvable problems have arisen, trapping of additional birds will resume until a total of eight birds have been fitted with transmitters. However, to prevent harassment during the breeding season, no birds will be captured from February 1, 1981, to the latter part of the summer. Trapping in succeeding years will follow the basis plan outlined above.

C. *Materials:* Wing-mounted solar powered transmitters, weighing about 60 grams and passing through the patagium of each wing, known to last up to three years or more, promise to be the best design for the birds and for this long term study. The overall radio telemetry equipment placed on each bird weighs about 120–150 grams which represents approximately 1.5% of body weight, well below the 5% body weight limit usually recommended in avian telemetry. Similar wing-mounted transmitters used on Andean condors at the Patuxent Wildlife Research Center and on free flying turkey vulturs (*Cathartes aura*) in Wisconsin show no negative effects on the tested birds. Also, California condors will not be fitted with the described transmitters unless encouraging results are received on like transmitters to be used on Andean condors this summer in Peru.

An array of fixed antenna towers, with adequate resolution capability to track overall movements of radioed condors and to put on-the-ground researchers in close vicinity of radioed birds, will be established to continuously monitor the entire condor range. "Pin-point" tracking of radioed birds will be accomplished with the assistance of portable receivers on the ground and in airplanes.

III. Formation of a Captive Population

A. Overall objectives and plans

1. The long term objective is to take five unpaired females and four unpaired males from the wild, whch, when added to the one male now in captivity, will provide a captive breeding stock of five pairs.

2. The captive birds will be distributed among three raptor propagation facilities including the San Diego Wild Animal Park, the University of California at Santa Cruz, and the Los Angeles Zoo.

3. The initial short term objective is to capture one subadult female between September 1980 and February 1, 1981, to be paired with the male held at the Los Angeles Zoo.

4. Plans to capture additional birds are scheduled for the later half of 1981 and will include the taking of subadult or non-breeding adults only.

5. The pros and cons of taking immature birds are discussed and is concluded with a statement that unpaired adults are genrally preferred. Second priority goes with immatures and lowest priority will be with taking paired adults that are unproductive in the wild.

6. The selection of birds to be taken will be made only after careful deliberation and with intensive review of telemetry data received.

B. Breeding facilities

1. Complete descriptions of the three breeding facilities are included and will be headed by the following personnel:

(a) San Diego Wild Animal Park—Dr. Art Risser.

(b) Santa Cruz Predatory Research Group—Dr. Kenneth Norris, Mr. Brian Walter and Mr. Clark Hall.

(c) Los Angeles Zoo—Dr. Warren B. Thomas.

2. All three facilities will be patterned after the Andean condor facility at Patuxent. Generally speaking, husbandry procedures will also be patterned after those developed at Patuxent. The facilities will not be opened to the public.

3. Captive condors will be manipulated in efforts to establish viable pairs.

4. Transporf of birds to the breeding facilities will be done by USFWS personnel with commercial type shipping pens. All precautions will be

taken to assure safe and comfortable travel for the birds.

IV. Justification

The main application text consists of 20 pages and includes a detailed justification for the proposed project under the following subheadings:

(1) Magnitude of the Recent Decline.
(2) Cause of Decline.
(3) Inadequacy of Traditional Research Methods.
(4) General Goals of Future Efforts.

V. Other Pertinent Information

A. The application is submitted as part of a cooperative agreement entitled "National Audubon Society—U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service, California Fish and Game Department, U.S. Forest Service, and U.S. Bureau of Land Management Cooperative California Condor Conservation Program." The objectives of this agreement are (1) to implement the California Condor Recovery Plan (2) to cooperate on field research on behalf of the California Condor Conservation Program, (3) to cooperate on public information and education, and (4) to provide for ongoing review of the recovery program with the assistance of the American Ornithologist Union.

B. California Recovery Plan: This permit request is the initial step to satisfy the objective of the California Condor Recovery Plan which is "to stop the decline of the species and increase the population to a secure level."

C. Initiation of the proposed research is subject to prior approval by the USFWS Associate Director, Federal Assistance, after his review of all data received in the Andean condor study this summer.

Documents and other information submitted with this application are available to the public during normal business hours at the following locations 1) Wildlife Permit Office, USFWS, Room 605, 1000 N. Glebe Road, Arlington, Virginia, or by writing the Director, USFWS, WPO, Washington, D.C. 20240, 2) Area Office, USFWS, Room E–2740, Federal Bldg., 7800 Cottage Way, Sacramento, CA 95825; 3) Condor Research Center, 2284 S. Victoria Ave., Suite 2G, Ventura, CA 93003; 4) Region 1, USFWS, Suite 1692, Lloyd 500 Bldg., 500 N.E Multnomah St., Portland, OR 97232; 5) Region 2, USFWS, P.O. Box 1306, Albuquerque, NM 87103; 6) Region 3, USFWS, Federal Bldg., Fort Snelling, Twin Cities, MN 55111; 7) Region 4, USFWS, P.O. Box 95067. Atlanta, GA 30347; 8) Region 5, USFWS, Suite 700, One Gateway Center, Newton Corner, MA 02158; 9) Region 6, USFWS, Box 25486, Denver Federal Center, Denver, CO 80225.

Interested persons may comment on this application by submitting written data, views, or arguments to the Director, USFWS, WPO, Washington, D.C. 20240 on or before June 23, 1980. Please refer to the file number (PRT 2–6563) when submitting comments.

Dated: May 6, 1980.

Donald G. Donahoo,

Chief, Permit Branch, Federal Wildlife Permit Office, U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service.

Appendix—Names and Addresses of Key Personnel

U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service:

Dr. Lucille Stickel, Director, Patuxent Wildlife Research Center, Laurel, Maryland 20811.
Dr. Milton Friend, Director, National Wildlife Health Laboratory, University of Wisconsin, c/o Dept. of Veterinary Sciences, 1655 Linden Drive, Madison, Wisconsin 53706.
Dr. Noel F. R. Snyder, Research Biologist, California Field Station, Endangered Wildlife Research Program, Condor Research Center, 2284 S. Victoria Avenue, Suite 2G, Ventura, California 93003.

National Audubon Society, Condor Research Center, 2284 S. Victoria Avenue, Suite 2G, Ventura, California 93003:

Mr. John C. Ogden, Senior Staff Scientist.
Mr. John C. Borneman, Condor Research Representative.
Mr. Bruce Barbour, Staff Scientist.
Mr. Gary Falxa, Staff Scientist.
Mr. Jesse Grantham, Staff Scientist.
Mr. William Lehman, Staff Scientist.
Mr. Lawrence A. Riopelle, Staff Scientist.

San Diego Wild Animal Park, P.O. Box 551, San Diego, California 92112:

Dr. Arthur C. Risser, Jr., Curator of Birds.
Dr. Kerry A. Muller, Assistant Curator of Birds.
Dr. Philip Terry Robinson, DVM.

Los Angeles Zoo, 5333 Zoo Drive, Los Angeles, California 90027:

Dr. Warren D. Thomas, DVM, Director.
Dr. Gary R. Kuehn, DVM.
Dr. Gerald N. Esra, DVM.
Mr. Michael Cunningham, Curator of Birds.

Santa Cruz Predatory Bird Research Group, University of California, Santa Cruz, Clark Kerr Hall, Santa Cruz, California 95064:

Dr. Kenneth S. Norris, Director of the Environmental Field Program.
Mr. Brian K. Walton, PBRG Coordinator.

Dr. Charles G. Sibley, Peabody Museum of Natural History, Yale University, New Haven, Connecticut 06520.

Dr. Kendall Corbin, Bell Museum of Natural History, University of Minnesota, Minneapolis, Minnesota 55455.
Dr. Stanley A. Temple, Department of Wildlife Ecology, University of Wisconsin, Madison, Wisconsin 53706.

[FR Doc. 80–14280 Filed 5–8–80; 8:45 am]

BILLING CODE 4310–55–M